

**Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project**

**STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH EDUCATION**

**IEQ undertaken by:**

**American Institutes for Research**

**in collaboration with  
The Academy for Educational Development  
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**Report prepared by:  
Carmen Siri  
Vilma Ruth Mendez  
Rafael Diaz Donaire**

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## INTRODUCTION

It is not by chance that *Educatodos* in Spanish means "Education for all." *Educatodos*, the IEQ-II partner in Honduras, is an alternative formal educational program aimed at providing quality education to youth and adults who have been excluded from the school system. *Educatodos* started in 1995 with the development of the alternative education program for first to sixth grades, having reached over 350,000 students by the end of 2000. The program is delivered by volunteer facilitators, and takes place in any available setting near the home or the workplace, with the sponsorship of private business, NGO's, local governments, as well as educational institutions and schools.

*Educatodos* and IEQ-II started working together<sup>1</sup> in November 1999, in the development of curriculum materials for an alternative education delivery system for basic education of 7th to 9th grade. The curriculum mapping has been produced, for both formal and alternative programs, and an integrated curriculum approach is being used for development of print and audio learning materials. One of the main crosscutting curricular themes is *Citizenship and Democracy*.

The approach to strengthening democracy through education proposed by *Educatodos* / IEQ-II involves three phases that move democracy from an expanded access -a quantitative approach-, to skills for living in democracy included in the curriculum -a qualitative approach.

- Providing equal opportunities in education.
- Moving education beyond the school.
- Exercising democratic processes.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION

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The Honduran educational system cannot cover all the demands of schooling beyond sixth grade. Approximately 65 of every 100 Hondurans do not enter seventh grade. Of the 35 Hondurans that have the fortune of attending middle school, 20 are in private schools, with government schools providing formal schooling to only 15. Thus, more than 1,600,000 persons in the country have not studied beyond sixth grade. It is estimated that several decades will be required to provide middle school access to the growing young population.

To alleviate this situation, *Educatodos* in partnership with IEQ-II, is developing an alternative system to reach youth and adults that have been excluded by the formal school system. Democracy is in this case enhanced as more people have the right to access formal education.

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<sup>1</sup> Through a USAID funded project for reconstruction after hurricane Mitch.

The product of this alternative education effort is that Honduras will have increased education indicators for this school level. Furthermore, the population will have improved their human development level and Honduras has the human resources to become a more active member of a globalized world.

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## MOVING EDUCATION BEYOND THE SCHOOL

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Educatodos is built to work in a situation in which physical infrastructure and resources are not available for expanding middle school to the level needed by the country. Educatodos converts this situation into a challenge, and takes advantage of research in education on multi-channel learning for proposing a system that works based on volunteerism, uses available infrastructure, and can be delivered at a lower cost than regular schools.

The program is delivered by volunteer facilitators, and takes place in any available setting near the home or the workplace, with the sponsorship of private business, NGO's, local governments, as well as educational institutions and schools. Alliances with national and local organizations and stakeholders are essential to the program, in order to be successful at the local level. The program builds in local support for alternative education centers to promote learning center sustainability.

Moreover, Educatodos takes education close to the learner moving the learning environment to the workplace, to the community center, to the home. Educatodos, in this manner encourages that participants integrate learning with community actions.

The product of this effort is that quality and relevant learning is accessible to youth and adults that wish to continue their education and improve their living conditions. Quality and relevant learning is the basis for constructing a democratic society.

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## EXERCISE OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

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The crosscutting theme of *Citizenship and Democracy* is one of the five key areas of the new curriculum in Honduras for seventh, eighth and ninth grades. The overall curriculum plan for this area has been formally defined, and the lessons in this area are being piloted this year. Under this curricular strategy, learners are given the opportunity to acquire concepts and develop learning processes that encourage democratic attitudes and behaviors. The curriculum focuses on exercising democratic processes through practical activities. Some of the activities include organizing community development efforts, establishing and participating in associations, practicing and analyzing citizen participation in local government, town councils, and plebiscites. Underlying values fostered by these activities involve tolerance, equity, justice, and recognition of the value and achievements of classmates and other

members of the community. The curriculum materials allow learners to analyze and exercise their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

The product of these efforts is anticipated that youth will believe that as citizens, they have an important role to play in the life of others, in protecting the environment, and in the overall development of their community, thus benefiting from the use of democratic attitudes and behaviors in their life.